



WORLD HEART DAY

World Heart Day is celebrated on 29 September to remind us of the importance of heart health and what steps to take to prevent heart disease.



Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are the leading cause of death worldwide, with approximately 17.9 million deaths in 2019, making up 32% of all global deaths (*World Health Organisation*).

Heart disease covers a range of conditions, which impact your heart and blood vessels. Some of the most common are:

CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE (CAD) occurs when the arteries supplying blood to the heart muscle become narrowed or blocked due to cholesterol and plaque buildup.

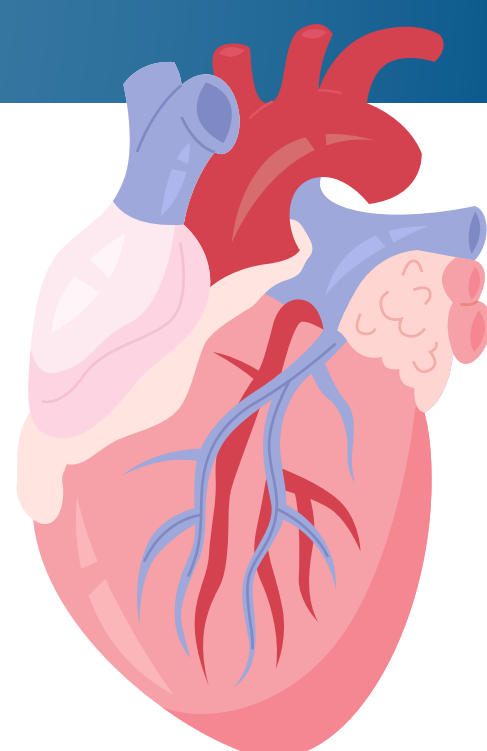
HEART ATTACK (Also referred to as myocardial infarction and which can include a severe manifestation of CAD). A heart attack occurs when the blood flow to a part of the heart is blocked, causing damage to the heart muscle.

HEART FAILURE occurs when the heart cannot pump enough blood to meet your body's needs.

HEART ARRHYTHMIAS are irregular heartbeats that can range from harmless to life-threatening.

HYPERTENSION (HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE) often leads to other heart-related complications and is a silent condition that damages your heart over time.

CARDIOMYOPATHY (HEART MUSCLE DISEASE) is a progressive heart disease where the heart is abnormally enlarged, thickened and/or stiffened. This reduces the heart muscle's ability to pump blood, often causing heart failure and the backup of blood in the lungs or rest of the body. This can also cause abnormal heart rhythms.



Recognise the symptoms and take action:

If you have any of these symptoms, contact a healthcare professional, or in the case of an emergency contact **ER24 on 084 124** (+27 10 205 3000 for Botswana and Namibia). ER24 is available 24/7, including for qualifying Botswana and Namibian members.

Many people with heart disease may not experience symptoms until a major event like a heart attack occurs, making regular checkups critical. (*South African Heart Foundation*)



Heart palpitations



Lack of energy



Dizziness



Pain, pressure or discomfort in your chest



Difficulty breathing during normal activities

Prevention and management

You can prevent and manage heart disease by making healthy lifestyle choices and staying active. Here's how:

EAT HEALTHY FOODS:

- Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins.
- Reduce your intake of saturated fats, sugar and salt.

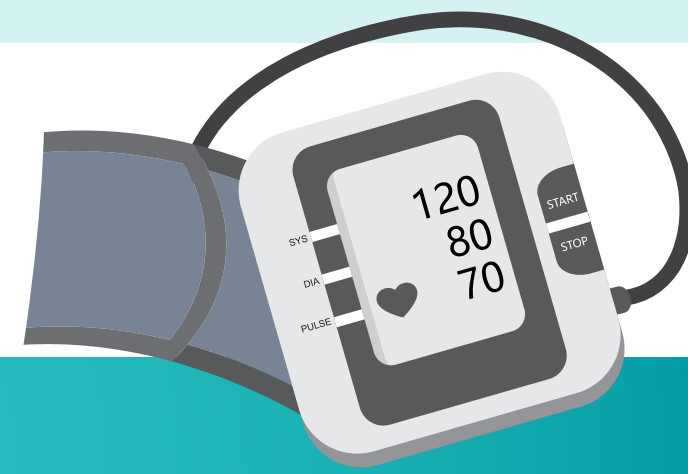


STAY ACTIVE:

- **Moderate exercise:** Aim for 150 minutes of moderate walking per week to boost cardiovascular health, mood and mobility.
- **Low-impact activities**, such as swimming, improve cardiovascular health without putting stress on your joints.
- **Variety and consistency:** Maintain a consistent exercise routine that includes a variety of activities for overall health benefits.

REGULAR MONITORING:

- Regularly check your blood pressure, cholesterol levels and heart rate to stay on top of your heart health.



The Society offers essential support to prevent and manage heart disease, including:



PREVENTATIVE AND EARLY DETECTION CARE includes blood pressure monitoring, blood sugar and cholesterol tests and heart health assessments.



MEDICATION FOR CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT including hypertension and heart-related diseases plus specialist consultations and monitoring. Heart-related chronic diseases are part of the CDL and Non-Listed CDL.



HOSPITALISATION for emergency admissions and surgeries, including coronary and vascular stents, transplants or open-heart surgery (coronary artery surgery or CABG). Managed-care protocols apply and pre-authorisation is required.

Take advantage of these benefits to better manage your heart health, reduce the risk of complications and enjoy a healthier, longer life.

Please Note: Society Rules and PMB legislation applies to all benefits listed above. Refer to the Benefit Guide or the Society Rules or contact the Society if you are unsure.

NEED HELP? Reach out to the Benefit Society if you have any queries.

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